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Science projects abound at fair

11th annual event features the scientific, engineering work of middle and high school students

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Break out your beakers and papier-mâché -- the 11th annual Tri-Valley Science and Engineering Fair will take place this week at the Robert Livermore Community Center in Livermore.

Hundreds of students in seventh through 12th grades in public and private schools in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin, Danville, San Ramon and Sunol will compete with projects covering a wide range of research categories, from botany and biochemistry to physics and space science.

The fair is sponsored by **Lawrence Livermore Laboratory**. Local scientists and engineers will judge the projects Wednesday morning, and the awards ceremony will be held that evening.

Winners of the senior division will go on to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in May in Albuquerque, N.M., where 1,400 students will compete for prizes, including a \$50,000 college scholarship.

Last year's winners of the Tri-Valley competition won awards at the Intel fair as well. Senior Mina Bionta of Livermore High School won an \$8,000 scholarship for her project, titled "Measuring Long-Term Trends in the San Francisco Bay Delta Using Satellite Imagery," as well as a \$1,000 cash prize for third place in the earth sciences category. Bionta currently attends Stanford University.

Farnoosh Nik-Ahd, now a senior at California High School in San Ramon, picked up an Organizational Special Award from Agilent Technologies for her project, "Role of Keratin Mutations as Susceptibility Genes for Liver Disease in Afro Americans."

The projects will be available for public viewing from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday at the Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Ave.

For more information, visit the Web site at www.tvsef.llnl.gov.